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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/783,292

02/18/2004

James D. Ralph

F-199 CON I

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07/01/2005

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EXAMINER

PELLEGRINO, BRIAN E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3738

DATE MAILED: 07/01/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/783,292

Applicant(s)

RALPH ET AL.

Examiner

Brian E Pellegrino

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 April 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 8-10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 April 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

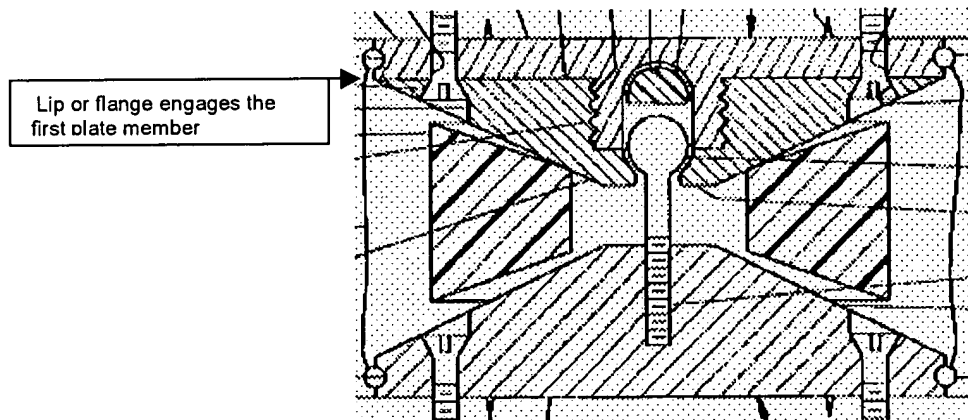
- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1,2,4,6,7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Harrington (5893889). Fig. 2 shows an artificial intervertebral spacer device with a first plate member **32** and a second plate member **34**. It can also be seen that the second plate surfaces (**36**, **40** respectively) face away from one another. Additionally, it can be seen that there is a convex element **54** with a curvate volume **50** maintained against the first member by retaining wall **78** and retaining ring **74**. Regarding claim 2, it can be construed that the subassembly is a restoring force subassembly since it includes shock absorbers **68,69**. With respect to claim 4, it can also be seen that the subassembly comprises a post structure **45** with a ball **46** extending from the second plate.



***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 3,5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harrington '889 in view of Ralph et al. (5989291). Harrington is explained supra. However, Harrington fails to disclose the convex element is a Belleville washer or the post includes a threaded bore to receive a set screw. Ralph et al. teach (Fig. 9) an intervertebral spacer device having a Belleville washer **230** between two plates with a post and ball coupled to the washer and also secured with a set screw **205**. Ralph also teaches that the Belleville washer is one of the strongest configurations for a spring, col. 3, lines 58-62. Ralph additionally teaches the set screw locks the post in place, col. 4, lines 44-46. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to substitute a Belleville washer for the convex element and also incorporate a set screw as taught by Ralph et al. with the spacer device of Harrington such that it provides a stronger force restoring subassembly than a shock absorber.

***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed 4/18/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Harrington does not have the convex element retained against the first plate member by the retaining wall. However, it is the Examiner's position that the retaining wall and retaining ring of Harrington do hold the

convex element against the plate in addition to the convex being secured to the first plate via other means.

***Terminal Disclaimer***

The terminal disclaimer filed on 4/18/05 disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent granted on this application which would extend beyond the expiration date of 10/781021 has been reviewed and is accepted. The terminal disclaimer has been recorded.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 8-10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Conclusion***

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian E Pellegrino whose telephone number is 571-272-4756. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 6:30am to 4pm. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott, can be reached at 571-272-4754. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

TC 3700, AU 3738

**BRIAN E. PELLEGRINO**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**

